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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002335

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SHEIKH SHARIF

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: I spoke with Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Sheikh Sharif as he began his travel to Turkey on November 6 to attend an Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit. The point of his trip was to see fellow Islamic heads of state and press for them to support the TFG, he explained. Sharif explained he had named a new Benadir Region/Mogadishu municipal administration, and was making changes to Mogadishu Port management to improve professionalism and transparency. Sharif also said he would make changes to his military command structure, after consulting with us. He gladly accepted the importance of the U.S.-led Security Sector Assessment report. Sharif asked us to press other nations, especially European and Gulf states, to financially support the TFG. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 6 I had a brief phone conversation with TFG President Sheikh Sharif before his departure for Turkey to attend the OIC economic summit.

¶3. (C) Sharif said that the TFG has finished setting up the new Benadir region administration. He is pleased with the result, because it incorporates educated professionals. At the same time, Sharif said, constructive changes have been made at the Mogadishu port to improve transparency and efficiency. (Note: Media reported on November 9 the TFG wanted to remove director Abdi "Jinow." End Note.) Sharif said he is very hopeful that the changes will have a positive impact in building support for the TFG.

¶4. (U) The new Benadir administration was subsequently announced as Abdirazak Mohamed Nur "Engineer Nune" (Hawiye/Rer Mataan) - Mayor and Regional Administrator; Abdisalam Dahir Abdulle (Hawiye/Haber Gedir/Sarur) - First Deputy for Political and Public Affairs; Warsame Mohamed Hasan (Hawiye/Muroside) - Second Deputy for Security; Iman Nur Ikar (Rer Hamar/Benaadiri, or descendent of Mogadishu's Arab trader settlers) - Administration and Finance; and Abdikafi Hilowle Osman (Hawiye/Hawadle) - Secretary General. Mayor Nur is a civil engineer and businessman, from an Abgal clan widely viewed to be truly native to Mogadishu. Early reports are that he is a respected professional who has remained above petty clan politics.

¶5. (C) In addition, Sharif reported, the TFG has staffed the military court, and is working hard on the civilian justice system, particularly the setting up of the Supreme Court.

¶6. (C) Sharif said that a number of former Somali military officers now in the United States and other places are ready

to return to Somalia to assist the TFG. The TFG needs financial support in order to make this happen. Sharif said that he may make changes in the military hierarchy in order to make his armed forces more effective. I emphasized the sensitivity of any changes, and he said that he would make no changes without consulting us in advance. I noted that the security sector assessment carried out by the United States, UK, and others is nearing completion, and emphasized the need for the President to support implementation of the recommendations. I pointed out that some within the TFG may resist doing this. Sharif said that he fully supports close cooperation with us and would ensure that his team works closely with us to follow up on the assessment and relevant recommendations.

17. (C) I commended Sharif on his continued efforts to reach out to regions and clans, as well as to the Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a. He said that he appreciates the importance of broadening support for the TFG, and will continue such outreach. He agreed that the TFG cabinet must be inclusive and have as broad representation as possible.

18. (C) Pre-empting a point I was going to make, Sharif said he is aware that some are concerned about the amount of time he has been spending away from Mogadishu recently. He plans to limit travel, but emphasized that some travel is crucial as part of his efforts to lobby international partners for support. At the OIC economic forum in Turkey, a number of key heads of state will be present, and he wants to press them to provide support for the TFG. There is also an East Africa Community forum in Addis on November 14 - 15, which

NAIROBI 00002335 002 OF 002

will present an opportunity to lobby for support. Sharif appealed to the United States to continue to press the Europeans, Gulf States, and others to honor commitments already made to the TFG and to provide additional support. I assured him that we are doing so.

19. (C) Sharif asked that I pass his regards to A/S Carson. Sharif inquired about the policy review on Somalia which he understood was being carried out in Washington. I assured him that the United States remains committed to supporting the TFG.

RANNEBERGER